BLACK PANTHER®

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HUDLIN
PORTELA

PREVIOUSLY

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, the African warrior nation of WAKANDA flourished and became a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically sound paradise—one that makes the rest of the world seem primitive in comparison. Ruling over this kingdom are the BLACK PANTHER and his queen, STORM.

At the conclusion of America's super hero civil war, T'Challa and Ororo found themselves in desperate straits: on the losing side of the fray and at odds with the United States of America. However, their luck seemed to change when Reed Richards and Sue Storm offered the couple residence in the Baxter Building and their places in the Fantastic Four.

After a series of adventures with the Fantastic Four, the Black Panther has returned to Wakanda. However, his kingdom is not in the same state in which he left it. His longtime adversary, Erik Killmonger, has seized control of the neighboring country of Niganda and taken T'Challa's sister Shuri hostage. T'Challa presumes this to be an attempt made by the U.S. government to contain Wakanda. After briefing Tony Stark—also known as Iron Man—on the situation, former Avenger Monica Rambeau was deployed to subdue Killmonger. But unbeknownst to Monica, Killmonger was ready for her attack and took her as his prisoner. Now, T'Challa has launched his own attack on Killmonger, eager to free the hostages and subdue his foe...

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BACK TO AFRICA

PART THREE

REGINALD HUDLIN WRITER | FRANCIS PORTELA ART | VAL STAPLES COLORS | VC'S CORY PETIT LETTERS | ALAN DAVIS, MARK FARMER & PAUL MOUNTS COVER | DANIEL KETCHUM ASSISTANT EDITOR | AXEL ALONSO EDITOR | JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF | DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

RELEASE MY PEOPLE AND LET'S AVOID THE INEVITABLE, KILLMONGER.
WHAT--ME WHUPPING YOUR BUTT? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I DO *EVERY TIME.* REMEMBER?
IF I DON'T SEE MY HOSTAGES FREED BY THE TIME I LAND, THERE WILL BE NO MERCY.
SO, EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE *NEVER* BEEN ABLE TO BEAT ME, YOU COME HERE THREATENING ME.
NOW, LET'S SAY YOU DO--LET'S TAKE A WILD LEAP OF THE IMAGINATION, AND SAY YOU DO BEAT ME. THEN WHAT?

I DON'T SEE MY PEOPLE.
EVEN IF--*IF*--YOU WIN, WILL YOU DO ANYTHING TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF NIGANDA? NO.
AND WHY NOT? BECAUSE THEY AREN'T YOUR TRIBE? HOW PRIMITIVE IS THAT?
KILLMONGER CARES. YOU MAY NOT LIKE MY SWAGGER, BUT AT LEAST I HELP PEOPLE.
YOU EXPLOIT PEOPLE--THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.
SO, TELL ME, T'CHALLA: IF I SURRENDER ***RIGHT NOW***, WILL YOU PROMISE TO TURN NIGANDA INTO A TECHNOLOGICAL PARADISE? SHARE THE RICHES OF WAKANDA WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS?
DON'T LET HIM *PLAY* YOU! IT'S A SETUP!
IT'S DAMN CLEVER, THAT'S WHAT IT IS. BUT T'CHALLA IS UP TO IT.

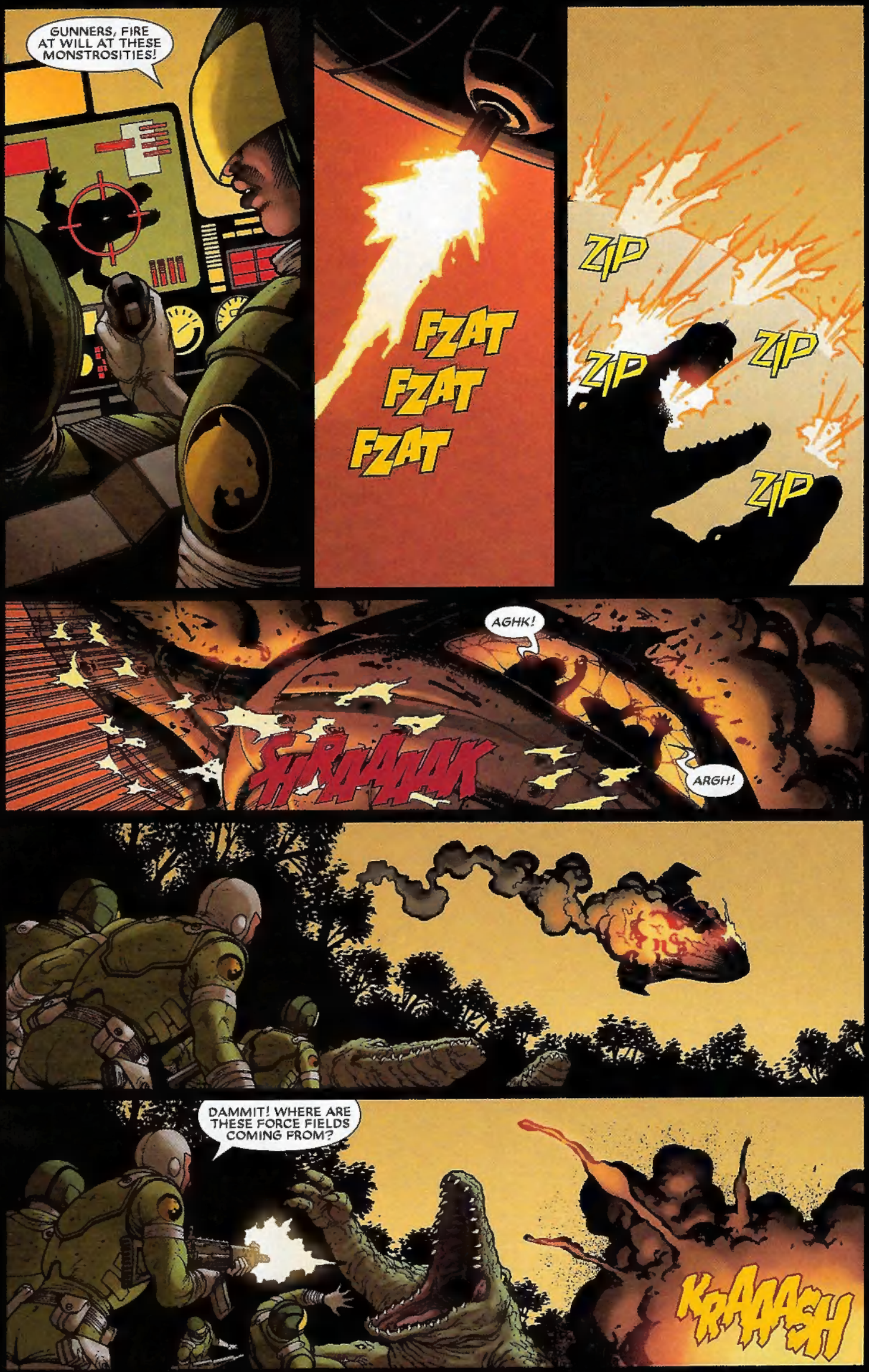
MEANWHILE...
WHOOMP
FIRST DOOR ON THE LEFT!
THEY CAN'T EVEN SHOOT STRAIGHT!
DON'T GET TOO COCKY. KILLMONGER SHOULD NEVER BE UNDERESTIMATED, EVEN THOUGH HIS FOOT SOLDIERS STINK.
HOW'S THAT DOOR?
AND WE ARE... IN!
WHAT TOOK SO LONG?
DAMN, GIRL! GOOD WORK!
WHERE IS THE TRANSPORT?
UM... DOWN THE HALL.

STOP PRETENDING LIKE YOU'RE HELPLESS, KILLMONGER. YOU ARE STILL ARMED TO THE TEETH.
RELEASE THE CAPTIVES NOW OR I ATTACK.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CONTACT--
NOW.
...WI MAN HO, WYZARI... JI, JI...
YOUR TROOPS HAVE ALREADY REMOVED YOUR SISTER AND HER "FRIEND."
AND MONICA?
CAN'T GIVE UP THE BIG PRIZE, HUH?
OKAY, I WILL CALL YOUR BLUFF.
IF KILLMONGER WILL NOT RESIST ARREST AND PROSECUTION FOR HIS CRIMES, I WILL USE MY RESOURCES TO HELP HEAL AND IMPROVE NIGANDA!

THANK YOU!
HEAR THAT, ERIK? SOUNDS LIKE YOUR SUPPORT IS A MILE WIDE AND AN INCH DEEP.
GOD BLESS YOU!
NOW TAKE THIS MAN INTO CUSTODY.
THAK
WHAP

PREDICTABLE.
AS ARE YOU.
KRAK
THUD

BACK AT THE NIGANDAN BORDER...
WHERE IS OUR AIR COVER?
THE JETS WOULD TAKE CIVILIANS OUT--OR YOU. WE'RE BRINGING IN HOVERCRAFT FOR A MORE SURGICAL ATTACK.
SWAP
I HOPE WE'RE STILL AROUND WHEN THEY GET HERE.
FFFF-ZZZAT


GUNNERS, FIRE AT WILL AT THESE MONSTROSITIES!
FZAT FZAT FZAT
ZIP ZIP ZIP ZIP
AGHK!
SHRAAAAK
ARGH!
DAMMIT! WHERE ARE THESE FORCE FIELDS COMING FROM?
KRAAASH

WE NEED YOU OFF THE FIELD OF BATTLE *NOW*. THE KING HAS TO FOCUS ON DEFEATING HIS OPPONENT, NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR WELL-BEING.
BUT I WANT TO HELP--!
GOOD. THEN *LEAVE*.
I GUESS IT'S BEST...
YOU KNOW IT IS. I KNOW HOW I WOULD FEEL IF I WERE HIM...
I DIDN'T EVEN SEE HIM BEFORE WE LEFT.
YOU GUYS WILL CATCH UP AFTERWARDS. HE'LL TAKE KILLMONGER OUT IN NO TIME.

DON'T WORRY, SHURI. IT'S ALMOST OVER.
I KNOW I'M A LITTLE TOUGH ON YOU SOMETIMES...
SOMETIMES?
BUT YOU MEANT WELL. AND YOU FOUGHT WELL.
NOT AS GOOD AS YOU.
BUT YOU SAVED ME WHEN I NEEDED IT. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
MY DAUGHTER IS ON HER WAY HOME? FANTASTIC NEWS!
AND WHERE IS T'CHALLA?

WHAM
LOOK-- HE'S RUNNING! PUNK.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THE CROWD *IS* FICKLE. THEY ONLY RESPECT POWER.
NO SISTER, WE CANNOT.
I'VE *ALWAYS* HAD THE POWER TO BEAT YOU. I DON'T CARE WHO ELSE YOU CAN BEAT. *I* CAN BEAT *YOU* AT WILL.

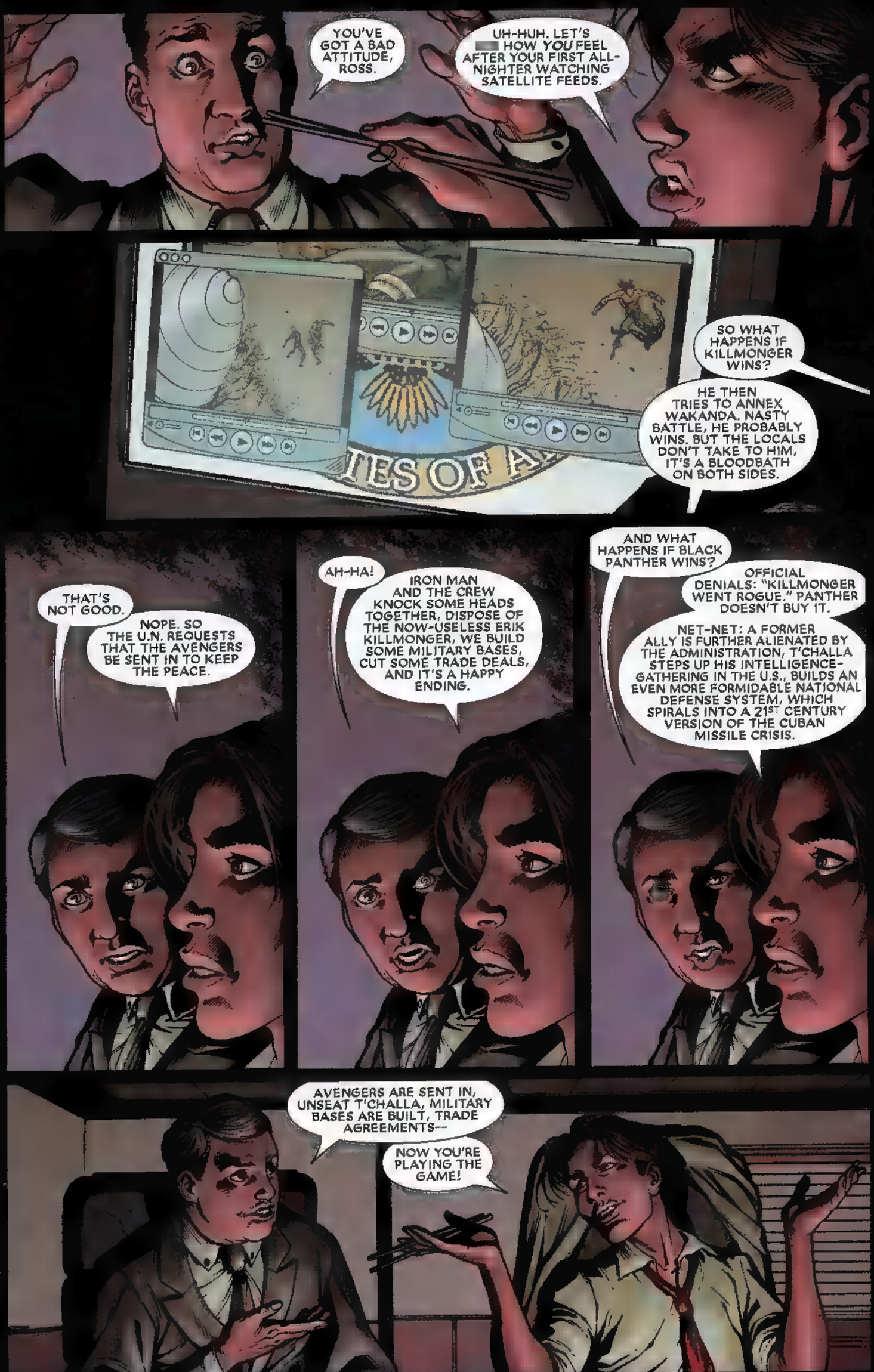
WHUMP
MOTHER--
CHUNK
OOOOOOOOOH... WHO SAW THAT ONE COMING?
FAIR PUNCH?
WHO CARES! LOOK AT THAT GUY. I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING...IF I COULD PUNCH THAT HARD.
SINCE YOU'VE SQUANDERED THE RIGHT TO SURRENDER, I WILL KEEP POUNDING YOU UNTIL YOU CAN'T MOVE ANYMORE. HOW ABOUT THAT?

ZURI! HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THE FORCE FIELD?
THIS MUST BE IT, SINCE THEY ARE GUARDING IT VERY HEAVILY.
WE'LL HAVE THEM SHUT DOWN IN A MINUTE, SIR.
HEY-- MY GUN'S JAMMED!
MINE TOO!
CHILDREN WITH GUNS...NOW I REALLY HAVE NO RESPECT FOR KILLMONGER!
THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY AREN'T DANGEROUS. CUFF THEM!

SHUNK
WHAT FRESH HELL IS THIS?
THESE APPEAR TO BE BIOLOGICAL LABS, SIR. PERHAPS THE SOURCE OF THE FORCE FIELD IS ADJACENT.
WHAT KIND OF INHUMAN MONSTER COULD BE THIS CRUEL TO ANIMALS?
GAAARRRRR!

HELP ME... PLEASE...
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO?
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO END THE PAIN.
WE WILL DO IT WITH MERCY.
BLAM

STATE DEPARTMENT. WASHINGTON, D.C.
EVERETT K. ROSS! ARE YOU HERE EARLY OR UP LATE?
DON'T GET CLOSE. I SMELL LIKE A GUY WHO'S BEEN PARKED IN FRONT A COMPUTER SCREEN ALL NIGHT.
SWEET! WHA'CHA WATCHING? BULGARIAN PORN?
I DON'T WANT TO HORN IN ON YOUR SPECIALTY, ETHAN.
NO, THESE ARE REAL-TIME DOWNLOADS OF THE LATEST FINAL SHOWDOWN OF BLACK PANTHER AND HIS ARCH-NEMESIS, ERIK KILLMONGER.
NIIIICE. LEMME SEE.
WHEW, YOU ARE KINDA RANK!
I WARNED YOU.
IS HE A CLIENT?
T'CHALLA OR KILLMONGER?
YEAH.
ONE USED TO BE [redacted].
SO WHO ARE YOU ROOTING FOR?
ME? I'M JUST HOPING YOU DON'T MAKE A PLAY FOR THE LAST OF MY COLD, GREASY SHRIMP BECAUSE I WOULD HATE TO GOUGE YOUR EYE OUT WITH THIS CHOPSTICK.


YOU'VE GOT A BAD ATTITUDE, ROSS.
UH-HUH. LET'S [redacted] HOW YOU FEEL AFTER YOUR FIRST ALL-NIGHTER WATCHING SATELLITE FEEDS.
SO WHAT HAPPENS IF KILLMONGER WINS?
HE THEN TRIES TO ANNEX WAKANDA. NASTY BATTLE, HE PROBABLY WINS. BUT THE LOCALS DON'T TAKE TO HIM, IT'S A BLOODBATH ON BOTH SIDES.
THAT'S NOT GOOD.
NOPE. SO THE U.N. REQUESTS THAT THE AVENGERS BE SENT IN TO KEEP THE PEACE.
AH-HA!
IRON MAN AND THE CREW KNOCK SOME HEADS TOGETHER, DISPOSE OF THE NOW-USELESS ERIK KILLMONGER, WE BUILD SOME MILITARY BASES, CUT SOME TRADE DEALS, AND IT'S A HAPPY ENDING.
AND WHAT HAPPENS IF BLACK PANTHER WINS?
OFFICIAL DENIALS: "KILLMONGER WENT ROGUE." PANTHER DOESN'T BUY IT.
NET-NET: A FORMER ALLY IS FURTHER ALIENATED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, T'CHALLA STEPS UP HIS INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING IN THE U.S., BUILDS AN EVEN MORE FORMIDABLE NATIONAL DEFENSE SYSTEM, WHICH SPIRALS INTO A 21ST CENTURY VERSION OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS.
AVENGERS ARE SENT IN, UNSEAT T'CHALLA, MILITARY BASES ARE BUILT, TRADE AGREEMENTS--
NOW YOU'RE PLAYING THE GAME!

SPLUD
CLIK
TIME--
--TO END THIS!
MY ABBOTT IS REINFORCED BY A PROTECTIVE VIBRANIUM WEAVE.
KRAK
SHLIK
CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?

KRACK
SINCE YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME HAND TO HAND, WHY DON'T YOU GET YOUR THRICE-BLESSED ARMOR AND SEE HOW YOU DO?
BOYS-- ATTEND ME!

THIS SEEMS TO BE THE ROOM... THE ENERGY SIGNATURE IS OFF THE CHARTS. THAT COULD MEAN THIS IS WHERE MONICA RAMBEAU IS, WHERE THE FORCE FIELD IS EMANATING FROM, OR BOTH.
THAT DOOR LOOKS PRETTY NASTY. JUST TRYING TO CRACK IT WILL PROBABLY SET OFF A SET OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS.
TYPICAL NIGANDAN THINKING. SPEND A FORTUNE ON THE DOOR...
NOK NOK
...BUT THE WALLS ARE CHEAP DRYWALL!

JUST IN TIME.

NOW THAT I'VE FIGURED OUT HOW TO TAP THE ENERGY OF THIS OTHER HAIRLESS APE, I CAN TEST IT ON YOU.
KILL IT!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
PING
PING
PING
PING
PING
PING
DON'T YOU GET IT? I GENERATE FORCE FIELDS. HOW STUPID ARE YOU ANIMALS?
TOO STUPID TO LIVE, APPARENTLY.
NEXT: TO LIVE AND DIE IN NIGANDA